

House and Senate Republicans on Monday applauded President George W. Bush's decision in the last hours of his presidency to commute the sentences of two former Texas Border Patrol agents.

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), who had written several letters to the White House in support of the agents, said he was "extremely pleased" that Bush commuted the sentences of Jose Compean and Ignacio Ramos. The two men were sent to prison in 2006 for shooting a man suspected of drug smuggling as he attempted to flee back into Mexico in 2005.

"Over the past several weeks, I have made the case for commutation in private discussions with senior White House officials," Cornyn said in a statement on Monday. "This action followed years of public pleas, including several letters to the President, for justice. I look forward to the day that Ramos and Compean are released and reunited with their families."

Both the House and Senate have held hearings to review the circumstances that led to the convictions of Ramos and Compean, who faced 11- and 12-year sentences, respectively. Following a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in July, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) joined Cornyn in calling for Bush to commute the sentences.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), one of the most vocal proponents of releasing the two patrolmen, said the decision was an answer to his prayers.

"This is not just a day of celebration for the families but it is a victory for all Americans, while acknowledging our system is flawed, to see that if they are involved, if they speak up and utilize their freedom, injustices can be corrected," Rohrabacher said in a statement.

Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.) commended Bush for his careful review of the circumstances surrounding their imprisonment.

"I am pleased that the sentences of Border Patrol Agents Ramos and Compean were

commuted, I have monitored this situation closely and been a steadfast advocate of their immediate pardon and/or the commutation of their sentences,” Campbell said. “Clearly President Bush issued this commutation with tremendous attention to detail and I believe he acted wisely.”